



# Breaking the cycle of poverty and food insecurity in Malawi

## Discussion Paper

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## About this paper

This brief was commissioned by the BRACC Knowledge and Policy Hub to synthesise the evidence and lessons learned on 'breaking the cycle' of poverty and food insecurity in Malawi, based on a literature review. It is part of a series of briefs that were prepared through the BRACC programme's evaluation in 2021.

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# KEY MESSAGES

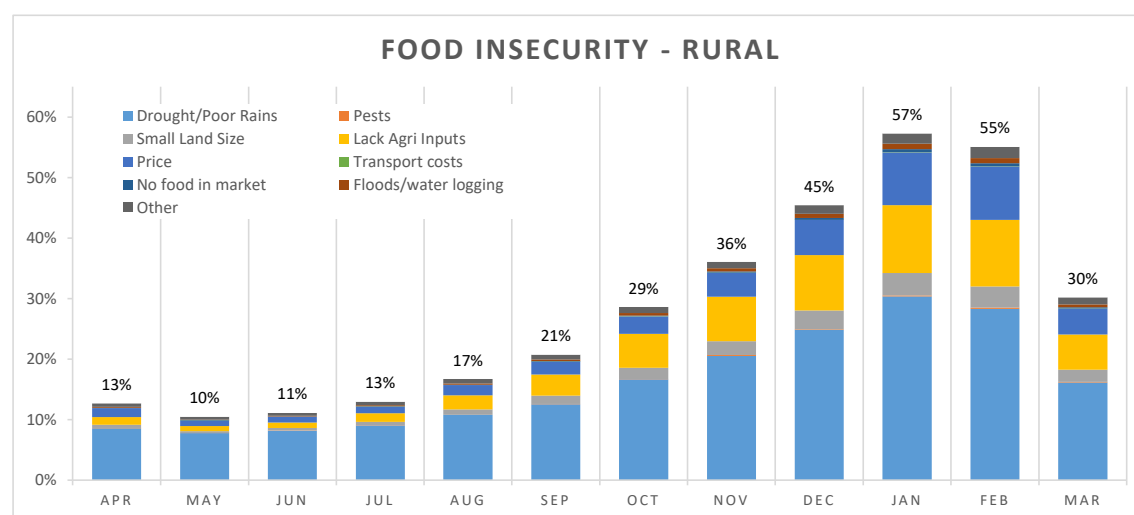
- ) Progress on 'breaking the cycle' of poverty and food security in Malawi has been varied overall.
- ) There have been noticeable improvements in the collection of data and targeting for humanitarian responses, with the adoption of the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) protocols making the categorisation of food insecurity more transparent and actionable.
- ) Government and development partners have also made significant advancements to the country's social protection system. This has largely been conducted through the trialling of humanitarian-development linkages and the development of social protection infrastructure.
- ) Resilience-building activities have been repeatedly hampered by competing development partner perspectives, resource constraints, and political challenges.
- ) Fragmentation in Malawi also remains a significant problem, particularly in the social protection sector, where different development partners pilot and promote their own programmes and objectives, with little coordination between themselves and with government, making improving programme linkages and developing a coherent national vision extremely difficult.
- ) At the heart of the country's ongoing issues with 'breaking the cycle' is the lack of political will to invest in risk reduction activities and reform entrenched agricultural institutions/practices. This has led to an over-reliance on development partner support, exacerbated fragmentation, and reinforced ongoing problems in the agricultural sector.

# 1. The history of ‘breaking the cycle’ in Malawi

Agriculture is essential to Malawi’s economy and food security, accounting for nearly 35% of GDP and employing over 80% of the working population.<sup>1</sup> The lives of most Malawians are thus inextricably linked to the country’s agricultural cycle, which is characterised by a single, main harvest season (April to June) and a long, protracted lean season, which runs from October to March.<sup>1</sup>

Over the last ten years, an average 1.8 million<sup>A</sup> Malawians (approximately 10% of the population) have been in receipt of emergency assistance every year, with this support delivered primarily over the lean months of October to March, when falling food stocks and rising agricultural prices lead to spikes in food insecurity, as shown in Figure 1.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1: Self-reported food insecurity and its causes, 2016-2017



Source: Fourth Integrated Household Survey (UHS4), 2017;<sup>2</sup>

With emergency assistance neither designed nor intended to tackle chronic needs, discourse around the need to ‘break the cycle’ in Malawi emerged in 2015.<sup>3</sup> Through “bridging development and humanitarian interventions and prioritising a continuum of more predictable livelihood support” it was believed that the impacts of Malawi’s lean season could be mitigated, or even prevented, and the need for regular emergency responses reduced.<sup>4</sup>

Through various channels, such as the Development Cooperation Group and the High Level Forum on Development Effectiveness, the Government of Malawi (GoM), development partners (DPs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) debated how to ‘break the cycle’, with a range of agricultural, humanitarian, social protection and disaster risk management solutions. Table 1 summarises these recommendations, their proponents, and their subsequent level of adoption.

The remainder of this brief draws on a wide range of published and grey literature to elaborate on developments made in recent years, constraints to further progress, and the challenges that need to be overcome to ‘break the cycle’ in Malawi.

<sup>A</sup> This figure is 1.4million if one excludes the exceptional drought year of 2016/17. Average calculated from 2010/11 - 2019/20.

Table 1: Main policy recommendations for 'Breaking the Cycle' in Malawi

Proposal	Proponent(s)	Adoption/Progress (0-5: low-high)
<b>Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) reform and diversification</b> was prioritised by DPs in 2016, who believed that reform of the FISP is necessary to improve productivity, crop diversification and market linkages for farmers.	DPs, non-state actors.	<b>0:</b> FISP was succeeded by the Affordable Input Programme (AIP) in 2021, which continues to deliver maize subsidies but with expanded budget and coverage, marking a step backwards from its predecessor.
<b>Develop a transparent rule-based approach for regulating agricultural markets</b> to standardise the use of long-standing export bans and review the use of opaque procurement practices by the Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC).	DPs, non-state actors.	<b>1:</b> ADMARC continues to impose export bans and utilise opaque procurement practices, hindering diversification and resilience building efforts.
<b>Develop effective management of land and water resources</b> to protect Malawi's endowment of land, forest and water resources. Given Malawi's significant deforestation and land degradation, a raft of policies and programmes from across government have emphasised the importance of effective resource management in recent years, including in the areas of irrigation, watershed management and afforestation, among others.	GoM, DPs, non-state actors.	<b>2:</b> Policies and legislations are in place, yet implementation remains weak, with inadequate institutional capacity particularly acute at the district level, and funding not following the decentralisation of tasks and responsibilities.
<b>Dedicate greater resources to humanitarian preparedness, response, recovery and resilience</b> in government budgets and activities was seen as essential by international and non-state actors to 'breaking the cycle' in Malawi.	DPs, non-state actors.	<b>2:</b> State investments in resilience building remain low, with Malawi continuing to be reliant on DP investment and emergency responses.
<b>Improve the collection and release of reliable weather, climate and food security data</b> to improve disaster risk management, prevention, and response. Malawi is extremely vulnerable to exogenous shocks, yet flood and drought risk management remain low down the political agenda, with a preference to wait for emergency response and DP intervention.	GoM, DPs, non-state actors.	<b>2:</b> MVAC targeting methods and approaches have improved through the adoption of the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) protocols, yet Early Warning Systems and the information generated by monitoring tools remains weak.

<p><b>Ensure a more effective and systematic humanitarian response system</b> through adopting learnings from the numerous pilots and trials. This includes the piloting of the Unified Beneficiary Registry (UBR) and various humanitarian-development linkages, with successfully evaluated pilots and approaches to be up-scaled.</p>	<p>GoM, DPs, non-state actors.</p>	<p><b>3:</b> Significant improvements from piloting and trialling have advanced the humanitarian response architecture. However, underdeveloped systems in some districts, and a lack of consensus on a national approach, have inhibited expansion.</p>
<p><b>Advance social protection programme infrastructures</b> such as the UBR, e-payments, and social support fund can assist in the identification of - and delivery of transfers to – beneficiaries, as well as help in harmonising programmes and enabling efforts towards graduation.</p>	<p>GoM, DPs, non-state actors.</p>	<p><b>2:</b> UBR data collection and verification ongoing, e-payments operate in only two districts, and the development of a coordinated funding mechanism, the social support fund, has not advanced.</p>
<p><b>Improve programme linkages to enhance synergies between social protection and other government programmes</b> was prioritised by all parties in 2016. It was felt these efforts could enhance resilience building efforts by providing a more comprehensive, integrative packages of interventions to break the cycle in Malawi.</p>	<p>GoM, DPs, non-state actors.</p>	<p><b>2:</b> Fragmentation remains significant with limited coordination between ministries and within social protection, where different DPs pilot and promote their own programmes and objectives, with little coordination.</p>
<p><b>Adequately resource social protection programmes</b> and ensure timely and efficient payment to ensure that Malawi's social protection programmes reach all households in need with sufficient and timely payments.</p>	<p>GoM, DPs, non-state actors.</p>	<p><b>2:</b> The proportion of Malawian households receiving social assistance has reduced significantly with the reduction in PWP coverage, while transfer levels continue to be adjusted sporadically and in an inconsistent manner.</p>

Source: Author's compilation.

## 2. Agriculture policy and practice

In the wake of 2016's additional discussions on 'breaking the cycle', the GoM began drafting the country's first National Resilience Strategy<sup>4</sup> and outlined a range of complementary strategies and activities intended to help break the cycle in Malawi.<sup>3</sup> These strategies and activities focused significantly on agricultural interventions, emphasising the importance of irrigation development, agricultural diversification, the integration of small-holder farmers into value chains, and continued government intervention in agricultural markets.<sup>3</sup> The government's strategies often did not align with those proposed by NGOs and DPs, leading to discord and differences not only in the vision and design of resilience activities, but also in their implementation.<sup>3,5,6</sup>

### Agricultural subsidies in Malawi

In 2005/06, the government introduced the Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP) in response to repeated maize deficits, cementing decades of ad hoc subsidies into formal government policy.<sup>3,4</sup> The introduction of FISP led to increased maize production and lower maize prices, strengthening already strong government support. Yet these subsidies have been contentious, with the majority of DPs and the NGO community arguing that FISP has perpetuated corruption and rent seeking among elite groups while failing to ensure food security for the majority of Malawians.<sup>3,5,6</sup>

DPs and NGOs have repeatedly called for reforms to maize subsidies and their inefficient implementation, which they believe are inhibiting diversification, sustainability, and the adoption of more drought tolerant and nutritious varieties of grain, roots, tubers and legumes.<sup>5,6</sup> Despite these calls, maize subsidies have continued unabated. In fact, since FISP expired in 2020, its successor, the Affordable Input Programme (AIP), has distributed only maize seed while consuming an even greater proportion of the Ministry of Agriculture's budget (3x more than FISP), thereby diverting even more resources away from resilience-building activities.<sup>7,8</sup>

As such, subsidies that were intended to improve the country's food security are actually at the heart of rent seeking behaviours. If subsidies are to be used, reform is necessary to reduce corruption, improve efficiency, and ensure crop diversification. This will become increasingly important as Malawi's soil and rainfall patterns do not favour maize production, conditions that will continue to worsen as a result of climate change.<sup>7</sup>

### Develop a transparent rule-based approach to the maize market

The GoM repeatedly intervenes in the country's agricultural sector, with the stated aims of regulating domestic supply and pricing, and ensuring the benefits of FISP remain within the country.

In 2016, both DPs and non-state actors called on the GoM to revise its strategic grain reserve guidelines to ensure the timely procurement of maize (at or shortly after harvest) so as to deliver a fairer price to farmers. These were accompanied by calls for increased predictability in the imposition of import and export bans by setting and implementing clear rules and conditions for their use by the country's Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC).<sup>5,6</sup> DPs believe that export bans disincentivise investment in agricultural production technologies and activities, thereby reducing growth and diversification; while government sees such interventions as essential for food security,



and has continued to impose export bans on maize virtually uninterrupted since 2015<sup>B, 3,5</sup>

Furthermore, the continuation of ADMARC's opaque procurement practices have hindered resilience building efforts in recent years, as ADMARC has resisted reform to its procurement practices and failed to integrate smallholder farmers into its agricultural value chains. ADMARC is the biggest buyer and seller of maize in the country but elects to purchase maize from traders months after the harvest season when prices are higher, rather than purchase directly from farmers at harvest, which would improve the price smallholders receive and lower the price ADMARC pays. ADMARC maize sales occur later in the year when stocks are depleted, but they have failed to ensure food security and repeatedly need to be subsidised. Current practices not only provide significant opportunities for patronage, but with pricing failing to cover the costs of purchase, government bailouts for ADMARC have become commonplace, increasing the GoM's fiscal burden.<sup>7,9,10</sup>

## Effective Management of Land and Water Resources

Malawi's rich endowment of natural land, forest and water resources are under increasing strain from human, agricultural, and climate stressors. Unsustainable cropland expansions, falling cropland productivity and increasing soil erosion have been reported across Malawi, with action critical to ensure sustainable cropland use.<sup>11,12</sup> It is thus no surprise that effective land and water management is a priority for government, DPs, and non-state organisations alike.<sup>3,5,6</sup> A raft of policies and proclamations from across government have emphasised the importance of reducing natural resource degradation in recent years. The National Resilience Strategy (2018-30) published by the Department of Disaster Management Affairs identifies catchment protection and management as one of four priorities to address the 'structural vulnerabilities' affecting poor people's lives. The recently established National Water Resources Authority will help strengthen multi-sectoral planning and management of water resources and pave the way for sustainable watershed management institutions at local and national levels.<sup>13</sup> A National Forest and Landscape Restoration Strategy, published in 2017, and the Malawi National Charcoal Strategy (2017-27) aim to reduce deforestation and outline an ambitious, nationwide programme for land restoration, with the intention to restore 4.5 million hectares of degraded landscapes by 2030. While public works programmes in Malawi have focused primarily on watershed and catchment management.<sup>14</sup>

While policies and legislation are in place, implementation remains weak, with monitoring often limited, compliance low, and the structures necessary for providing guidance and backstopping not in place. Inadequate institutional capacity is particularly acute at the district level, where funding flows have not always followed the decentralisation of tasks and responsibilities to lower levels of government.<sup>13,15</sup> The GoM is currently in the process of mobilising finance from its DPs to support strategy implementation, but progress to date has been limited, with scant resources available.

One area of priority for the GoM has been irrigation development, which it believes is key to improving food security. However, the huge investments required to build, maintain and manage irrigation systems means they remain underdeveloped. As of 2016, only around 107,000 hectares of 385,000 hectares of irrigable land was developed in Malawi<sup>3</sup>, with little progress made since to transform this land. Four new irrigation schemes with a total hectareage of 10,500 hectares were earmarked for development in 2016<sup>C,3</sup>; however, as of end 2021 these projects remain largely unimplemented.

<sup>B</sup> The GoM did briefly lift its ban on maize exports in 2017, only to reinstate it in February 2018, and it has remained in place ever since (FAO, 2018; WFP, 2020a).

<sup>C</sup> Nthola-Ilola-Ngosi (1000 hectares) in Karonga district; Malombe scheme (500 hectares) in Mangochi district; Chikwawa scheme (1000 hectares) in Salima district; and Bwanje (formerly Spearhead – 8,000 hectares) in Dedza district (GoM, 2016a)



### 3. Disaster Risk Management and Humanitarian Responses

For over a decade, Malawi has been supporting an average of 1.8 million people every year (10 per cent of its population) with emergency assistance. This figure reached 6.7 million in 2016/17 after successive and compounding climatic shocks<sup>D</sup> left over a third of the country in need of assistance.<sup>16</sup> Malawi's reliance on emergency support has done little to address the underlying, chronic needs of many Malawians. In response, a range of disaster risk management (DRR) and humanitarian actions were put forward by government, DPs and non-state organisations alike, varying from improved coordination and budgeting to more effective and systematic humanitarian responses to meet seasonal, recurring needs.<sup>3,5,6</sup>

#### Dedicate greater resources to humanitarian preparedness, response, recovery and resilience

In response to the increasing frequency and intensity of emergency responses in Malawi, the government committed to a range of disaster risk management (DRM) initiatives in 2016. This included pledges to rehabilitate and upgrade the country's hydrological and hydromet stations, improve surface and ground water monitoring, and enhance flood modelling and forecasting, particularly in the Shire River Basin.<sup>3</sup>

Despite these good initial efforts, limited public resources have been dedicated to DRM activities. There are no lines in the latest government budget for disaster risk reduction (DRR) or DRM, nor have there been for several years, with districts largely without local officers to coordinate activities.<sup>13,17,18</sup>

As such, improvements in flood protection and early warning systems are still gravely needed. Approximately 40% of Malawi's land remains at risk of severe degradation, while 80% requires 'restorative intervention'.<sup>14</sup> In light of low public and private sector investment, significant resources have been invested by DPs in DRR activities in Malawi<sup>E</sup>.<sup>18</sup> This has led to inevitable questions over the sustainability of the DRR structures and systems being built by international organisations, as well as the ability of the government to drive its own DRR and resilience agenda.<sup>18,21</sup>

#### Improve the collection and release of reliable data to improve assistance

To enhance humanitarian response efforts, advancements in the identification and targeting of households – and the timely release of this information – were advocated by all state and non-state partners in 2016. This included calls for the improvement of the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee's (MVAC) targeting methodology, and proposals to ensure that early warnings data, crop estimates and MVAC reports are issued to the public in a timely and transparent manner.<sup>3,6</sup>

In 2017, Malawi adopted the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) protocols for determining acute

<sup>D</sup> Malawi experienced its worst floods in 50 years in January 2015 followed by the strongest El Niño event in 35 years in 2015/16

<sup>E</sup> For instance, FEWSNet is entirely funded by USAID; FCDO, Irish Aid and the Norwegian Embassy funded the Enhancing Community Resilience Programme 2011-2017; UNDP invested heavily in climate information and EWS development through M-CLIMES; the World Bank is investing \$160mn in the new Malawi Watershed Services Improvement Project (2020), and funded the Shire River Basin Management Project and Integrated Flood Risk Management Strategy, the Malawi Flood Emergency Recovery Programme (2015-2019) and the Malawi Drought Emergency Recovery Programme (2017-2021).<sup>18-20</sup>

food insecurity, integrating consensus-based food security and malnutrition analysis into existing need assessments in the country. The IPC uses data from MVAC, SMART (nutrition) and market surveys to provide a standardised estimation of food-insecure households, which can be used to trigger a more accurate emergency response. The adoption of the IPC protocols has made the categorisation of food insecurity more transparent and actionable, with benefits for decision-making and early action.<sup>22</sup> However, “weak governance of early warning systems” (EWSs) and low levels of investments in EWSs mean that it is possible to improve predictive modelling further.<sup>18</sup>

## Ensure a more effective and systematic humanitarian response system

In recent years, government and DPs in Malawi have looked to tailor and align humanitarian response processes with the country’s social protection system to better manage and respond to climatic shocks. This has largely been conducted through the trialling of humanitarian-development linkages, such as vertical and horizontal expansions<sup>F</sup>, and developing system infrastructures, such as the country’s first national social registry (the UBR) and first national identification card.

In 2015, government and DPs commissioned a joint assessment of the Social Protection Management Information System (MIS) and the potential for a unified, national social registry. Off the back of this assessment, a “Harmonised Targeting Tool” was developed, which became the precursor to Malawi’s first national social registry – the Unified Beneficiary Registry (UBR).<sup>22,25</sup> Pilots in Dedza and Nkhata Bay were conducted in 2015, before data collection was expanded to 13 districts in 2016 and nationally shortly after. In concurrence, the government, with support from United Nations Development Programme, began rolling out a national ID in 2017, registering everyone over 16 years old by providing them with a photo ID and unique identification number. Core demographic data was recorded onto an e-wallet and kept by the National Registration Bureau, with registration data updated yearly and recorded in the UBR. The introduction of a national ID and the UBR means that interoperability between MISs and MVAC becomes a possibility; however, full national operability is some way off.<sup>22</sup>

Alongside the development of the UBR and national ID, several pilots have trialled ‘automatic inclusions’, ‘vertical expansions’ and ‘horizontal expansions’<sup>G</sup> in differing districts to advance a more shock sensitive social protection system in Malawi, with these pilots utilising and honing elements of the social protection system to improve and test its applicability for delivering emergency assistance.<sup>22,26</sup> Feedback from these pilots have shown great promise. Increased government ownership, improved system strengthening, and clear time and cost efficiencies were reported across all trials.<sup>24,26,27</sup> The review of the 2019/20 horizontal expansion in Balaka found that “both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries expressed satisfaction in targeting” during the response, which “eliminated favouritism and bribery”.<sup>24</sup> While the use of the UBR in the 2020/21 lean season response in Balaka and Nsanje was deemed to have aided effective targeting and made the response “faster and easier” to execute; while the use of the UBR in these districts was also reported to have “enhanced community acceptance of the selection/targeting process” as it led to “limited local leader interference”.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>F</sup> For instance, in the wake of the El Niño-induced drought of 2016, the Humanitarian Response Committee ‘automatically included’ all SCTP beneficiaries in drought-affected areas (132,916 households) in the MVAC response.<sup>23</sup> Two years later, a ‘vertical expansion’ (VE) operational trial took place in Balaka, where the value and duration of the ‘VE top-up’ mirrored that of the humanitarian response.<sup>22</sup> And in 2019/20, the GoM temporarily increased the level of assistance provided to 108,000 SCTP households in shock-affected districts (a ‘VE’) while also leveraging the social protection system to deliver emergency assistance to non-SCTP households in Balaka district (an ‘HE’).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>G</sup> In Malawi the terms Vertical Expansion (VE) and Horizontal Expansion (HE) have been used in a way that is different from their globally recognised uses, and generally refers to ‘piggybacking’ which is where elements of an existing social protection programme or system are used to deliver a separate emergency response.

Despite these benefits, there remain several stumbling blocks to utilising Malawi's social protection system to deliver emergency responses. Most notably, the country's Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) - the social protection programme used for delivering cash-based emergency responses - is still nascent and expanding the programme at this time may overburden it, considering the programme's weak institutional capacity and infrastructure. In addition, if responses are to be increasingly channelled through social protection systems, then the potential of the programme to target food-insecure and vulnerable groups will need to be reviewed. While the SCTP targets ultra-poor and labour constrained households – arguably the most vulnerable group in Malawi – expanding the programme horizontally using the same targeting method (the country's Proxy-Means Test) would base any additional caseload on a measurement of poverty, not food insecurity. This narrow targeting criterion also leaves no room for targeting vulnerabilities beyond income, nor does it allow for gender-sensitive approaches to delivering assistance, stressing the importance of using hybrid approaches/methodologies to ensure inclusive targeting.<sup>19,29</sup>

## 4. Strengthening National Social Protection Systems

An area of significant progress in recent years has been social protection. In 2016, government, DPs and non-state organisations agreed on the need to strengthen the country's social protection system so that it may better meet the needs of vulnerable households and protect them from increasing shocks.<sup>3,5,6</sup> Specific recommendations included advancing programme infrastructures, such as the UBR and e-payments; improving programme budgeting and the linkages between social protection programmes; and making programmes more shock-sensitive and/or re-orientating programmes to support climate smart agriculture practices.

### Advance programme management and distribution infrastructures

As mentioned earlier in this brief, the roll-out of Malawi's UBR – the country's first national social registry – is far from finalised, with data verification in the majority of districts incomplete. Having a common database could significantly improve programme coordination and graduation, as well as advance targeting accuracy. The roll-out of the Unified Beneficiary Registry was “expected to be completed in the course of 2016” but it is not operational in the majority of districts.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, advancements in e-payment infrastructures have been slow, with e-payments used for transfer payments in only two districts. While a common and coordinated funding mechanism for social protection – such as the long-proposed social support fund – is far from a reality with differences between DP priorities and concerns over the use and management of a centralised fund preventing its realisation.<sup>7,22</sup>

### Improve programme linkages

The building of synergies between social protection and other government programmes, such as agriculture, health, nutrition, MVAC and DRR, was prioritised by all parties in 2016.<sup>3,5,6</sup> In recent years, humanitarian-development linkages have been improved through extensive piloting, as previously discussed; linkages between social and agricultural policy have been augmented in recent years, with PWP focused on the building of community assets in the areas of land and water management; while the SCTP has trialled various nutritional pilots, with mixed success.

Despite these efforts, fragmentation remains significant, particularly in the social protection sector, where different DP pilot and promote their own programmes and objectives, with little coordination between DPs and with government. This is true for all social protection programmes, but is particularly the case for the SCTP, where different DPs are responsible for different districts, with DPs also offering competing visions for the future of social protection in the country. This makes improving programme linkages and developing a coherent national vision for the future of social protection in Malawi extremely difficult.

### Adequately resource social protection programmes and ensure timely and efficient payment

As of 2021, Malawi's social protection programmes did not reach all households that live in ultra-poverty, let alone poverty, with budgeting constraints leaving many without assistance. Malawi's SCTP currently reaches only 7% of the population, below its 10% target and far below the 20% ultra-

poverty rate in the country.<sup>30</sup> SCTP transfer levels remain low, covering just 18% of household consumption, and suffer from frequent operational difficulties and delayed payments.<sup>19,29,31</sup> In addition, the new Enhanced Public Works Programme (EPWP) launched in 2020 reached a mere 10,000 beneficiaries and will only be scaled up to 35,000 households upon full national roll-out, far less than the 450,000 reached by its predecessor, the Malawi Social Action Fund IV. This means the proportion of Malawian households receiving social assistance has reduced significantly.<sup>32</sup> While the country's School Meal Programmes reach only selected children in 44% of Malawi's primary schools.<sup>2</sup>

Expanding programme coverage and increasing transfer levels is challenging given the fiscal obligations of doing so, and with continuing efforts to reshape and refocus these programmes, the potential for programme expansion during piloting and/or revision is naturally constrained.

## 5. Concluding remarks

Resilience building activities in Malawi have been repeatedly hampered by competing DP perspectives, limited resources, and political challenges, with progress on 'breaking the cycle' varied as a result.

Resources remain concentrated on poorly focused and implemented agricultural subsidies and on humanitarian responses, at the expense of resilience-building activities and proactive resource management. This maintains the status quo of continued dependence on external and domestic assistance, rather than 'breaking the cycle'.

Like the previous administration, Malawi's new government has so far failed to place resilience building and the country's National Resilience Strategy at the centre of its policies and plans. Yet without greater coordination and leadership, the integration of resilience building into government activities will remain elusive. There is, as such, a clear need to reset and refocus national efforts towards 'breaking the cycle' in Malawi, otherwise the country will continue to remain in a cycle of deprivation.



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